

## WIPP Quick Facts (As of 10-23-06)

**5,176**

Shipments received since opening

**43,040**

Cubic meters of waste disposed

**83,863**

Containers disposed in the underground

## Video Special: WIPP Permit Signing Ceremony

Did you miss the signing ceremony? Click below for a 10-minute summary of the event's highlights on streaming video. Please note that due to file size, this may take a few minutes to load.

## [Permit Signing Ceremony](#)

## Carlsbad Current-Argus Editorial: Credit where credit is due

The momentous occasion of having the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant's remote handled waste permit signed Monday came about through the effort of many.

Rep. John Heaton, Sen. Carroll Leavell, Gov. Bill Richardson and New Mexico Environment Department Secretary Ron Curry all celebrated this milestone and also gave credit where it is due: to the men and women who operate WIPP.

This permit was approved after months of a governmental process involving hearings, public input and investigating the safety of handling this level of waste. Public hearings held earlier this year in Carlsbad were very pro-WIPP, as residents of this city support the effort to clean up the nation's nuclear waste. WIPP, as an entity with contract agencies and the federal government involved, is also an economic engine from Carlsbad and Eddy County.

## Governor Richardson, NMED Secretary Curry sign new WIPP permit



Hesitating just long enough for NMED Secretary Ron Curry to joke, "writers' block," Gov. Bill Richardson signed the revised WIPP hazardous waste facility permit to the applause of a standing-room-only crowd. The permit, co-signed by the Secretary and Governor October 16 in Carlsbad, will bring new efficiency to the National TRU Waste Program and sets the stage for disposal of remote-handled TRU waste at WIPP.

The Governor called the permit a tribute to the safety efforts of WIPP employees and thanked Secretary Curry, his staff, the DOE, WIPP contractors and New Mexico environment groups for "a product of careful review." Speaking of the WIPP project's continued success, he emphasized, "The key is state, not federal, oversight."



At the podium: Senator Carroll Leavell. Seated left to right: Governor Bill Richardson, NMED Secretary Ron Curry, Representative John Heaton, CBFO Manager Dave Moody and Carlsbad Mayor Bob Forrest.

Permit writer James Bearzi said that having RH waste shipped to the WIPP site brings the project fully functional in his eyes. It was a portion of the project that was always intended to come about. Now it will happen: remote handled waste will be shipped to Carlsbad, starting in the spring of 2007. It will be placed in the walls of the same underground storage rooms where contact waste is stored. Remote handled waste emits more penetrating radiation than contact-handled waste, but because of the impeccable operation of the WIPP site and the tremendous safety record in the delivery, receipt and burial of the waste, this aspect of the project has been approved.

The men and women who transport the waste, those who work at the mine where it's buried, the folks keeping the records and the folks in charge of following the details of the permit rules - those are the ones who need to take a bow right now. RH waste permitting would have been hard to fight for if the present nuclear material and the WIPP system had safety, accountability or operational issues. It has none of those, thanks to the men and women on the ground.

The local leaders - not just elected officials who know who to call, but the scientists who supervise the operation and the leaders of Washington TRU Solutions, Sandia Labs and Los Alamos, you too, take a bow. All your hard work - and your accountability over two decades - has paid off for all of us. Through a government process designed to hear all sides of the story, and with the background of safe and healthy operations for New Mexicans and our landscape, WIPP has the permission to do more for America.

Congratulations to all involved.

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Secretary Curry also recognized the efforts of New Mexico stakeholders and his staff: "We answered and addressed hard issues." NMED fostered a new approach to the permit process that included early public involvement and expanded opportunities for public participation. In spring 2006, NMED facilitated several weeks of intense negotiations related to the 2005 Section 311/RH draft permit to resolve issues and concerns prior to the public hearings.

The result was a draft permit "as changed" that included stronger, clearer, more protective language and improved public access to WIPP information. Following two weeks of technical and non-technical testimony in May and June of this year, Rip Harwood, a state-appointed public hearing officer, recommended approval of the draft permit as changed to Secretary Curry.

### Permit Changes

The modified permit:

- ⌘ allows WIPP to receive RH TRU waste
- ⌘ establishes a comprehensive plan for analyzing both CH and RH-TRU wastes destined for WIPP
- ⌘ establishes a dispute resolution process for citizens, the state and federal agencies for resolving audit issues related to waste characterization
- ⌘ provides an e-mail notification system to inform the public of WIPP permit activities
- ⌘ provides public access to non-security sensitive information in the WIPP waste database
- ⌘ increases requirements for the monitoring of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in the WIPP repository
- ⌘ increases temporary waste storage on the surface at the WIPP facility
- ⌘ establishes conditions for how capacity in the WIPP underground disposal units is used for RH waste

### Permit Implementation

The new permit becomes effective November 16, 2006. Because RH-TRU waste disposal has long been part of the WIPP mission, plans for its implementation are well established. In the months leading to the Secretary's decision, WIPP and the TRU waste generator sites have readied for safe, compliant RH-TRU waste operations. The first RH-TRU waste shipment likely will come from Idaho National Laboratory in early 2007.

What remains for successful and complete implementation of the new permit is:

- ⌘ DOE must conduct an independent Operational Readiness Review of RH-TRU waste handling and disposal processes at WIPP before declaring readiness to receive RH-TRU waste
- ⌘ Idaho National Laboratory audit: An independent audit will be performed in December to assess INL compliance to requirements in new permit. NMED must review and approve the final audit report before first RH-TRU shipment.

The EPA must publish its Base line Inspection Report certifying that INL is in compliance with waste disposal standards, followed by DOE Carlsbad Field Office's certification of INL.



Dr. Ines Triay, chief operating officer for the DOE's Environmental Management Program, addresses the crowd at the permit signing ceremony.



## Join Energy Secretary Bodman saving energy ... one bulb at a time

WTS Energy Manager Gary Morrison saw the light. Months ago Morrison changed the lighting in his house to compact fluorescent or energy efficient T-8 lamps. "I benefit from lower electricity bills and my country benefits from a reduction in energy consumption," says Morrison.

Energy Secretary Samuel Bodman would like everyone to enjoy the benefits of energy savings. Earlier this month the Secretary launched the "*Change a Light*" initiative, urging DOE employees and contractors to take a pledge to change at least one standard light bulb in their homes to an Energy Star-qualified bulb. These bulbs last up to 10 times longer than standard bulbs, use at least 2/3 less energy and save users money on utility bills.

Every agency in the federal government has been asked to participate and Bodman wants DOE to lead the way. "Your participation level will speak volumes about the importance of using Energy Star bulbs, since you are respected as our nation's energy experts," says Bodman.



To participate, view the DOE "*Change A Light*" Web site at <http://www.energy.gov/pledge.htm> and fill out the pledge form. It's easy to do and should only take a minute.

## End of the Day



Congratulations to WIPP employee Art Chavez (WRES) who won top honors in the "At Home" category of a Washington Group International photo contest with his photo titled *End of the Day* (above) . Chavez snapped the picture of co-worker Tana Saul after a recent rodeo in Carlsbad, N.M.



Employees were able to submit photos in three categories: At Home, At Work and Nature. Experts selected the top five finalists in each category and winners were chosen online by employees worldwide. Winners received their choice of an all-in-one printer or a digital photo receiver.

In addition, a photo by Mike Antiporda (WTS) titled *Water Spray at Sunrise* was chosen as a finalist in the "At Work" category.

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### **SBA Says WIPP Contractor Program Outstanding**

WTS' small business program received an "Outstanding" rating by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) for exceeding all of its small business goals. The rating was the result of a comprehensive, on-site review completed last month.

The purpose of the SBA review was to evaluate how well WTS met U.S. Department of Energy-negotiated goals for small business subcontracts, small business assistance, outreach and training. In fiscal year 2006, WTS placed 83 percent, or more than \$59 million, of its available procurement dollars with small businesses, exceeding its 2006 goal of 45 percent.

"I'm very proud of our efforts on behalf of small business," said Raaz. "Helping small businesses compete in the government procurement process is particularly important to southeast New Mexico and the state."

As defined by SBA, an outstanding rating signifies that a company has an exemplary program that could be used as a model by other contractors in similar industries.

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## **WIPP hits high marks in FY06**

Fiscal Year 2006 ended September 30, but unless you're an accountant you probably didn't pay too much attention. Within government circles fiscal year-end is a time to review what was accomplished within the allotted budget. WIPP accomplished much in FY06.

More shipments were made in FY06 than in any previous fiscal year. WIPP made 1,126 shipments, compared to the previous high of 964 in FY04. In the last week of FY06, WIPP received 33 shipments in a single week, tying a record set in February. With the September shipments, however, were a record number of packages: 85 TRUPACT-IIs and 14 HalfPACTs for a total of 99.

WIPP also disposed more TRU waste in FY06, than in prior years. Over 10,556 cubic meters of TRU waste were emplaced in the repository, or nearly 20 percent more than 2004's high of 8,810 cubic meters.

WIPP also continued to exceed in safety. In FY06, there were no injuries causing days away from work. The project exceeded 700 days since the previous injury that caused days away from work and surpassed the 3.5 million work hour milestone.

Here are a few other highlights from FY06:

#### **February 21, 2006**

WTS Central Characterization Project played a key role in the removal of 6,000 cubic meters of waste from Idaho National Laboratory, completing an agreement between DOE and the state of Idaho.

#### **March 29, 2006**

The Environmental Protection Agency recertified WIPP.

#### **July 19, 2006**

Mining began in WIPP's Panel 5.

#### **September 10, 2006**

WIPP received its 5,000th safe shipment of TRU waste. The shipment originated at the Idaho National Laboratory.

#### **September 13, 2006**

The NMED-appointed hearing officer recommended approval of the negotiated draft WIPP Hazardous Waste Facility Permit to NMED Secretary Ron Curry, setting the stage for RH-TRU waste operations.

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### **Interested in WIPP?**

If you would like to be notified when TRU TeamWorks is updated with the latest information about WIPP, send an e-mail message to [TRUTeamWorks@wipp.ws](mailto:TRUTeamWorks@wipp.ws).

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## **WIPP Celebrates National Quality Month**

October is National Quality Month. As part of WIPP celebrations, the Quality Assurance (QA) and Safety departments are encouraging employees to "Take Safety and Quality Everywhere."

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### A word of thanks

Thanks so much to my WIPP family/friends for the support you provided during the loss of my mother. Your prayers, encouraging words, and generosity are beyond measure. I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Sincerely,

Lisa Roback

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Jon Hoff, Tom Ferguson and Bill Allen promote quality and safety at the Skeen-Whitlock Building.

Safe work practices and high quality standards go hand-in-hand says WIPP management.

"Our business is about providing a safe repository for TRU waste. An important element in that mission is to maintain public confidence . . . and that means we must demonstrate a near-perfect performance in delivering safety and quality. I applaud our efforts in this vital arena and expect each of us to take to heart "Safety and Quality Everywhere."

--Dick Raaz, WTS General Manager

"A quality product is a safe and compliant product. Attention to the details of safety and quality by a dedicated and focused workforce will always result in a successful project like WIPP."

-- Jon Hoff, QA manager

"No matter how safe we perform our work, it will be futile without performing quality work also. You must have both a quality product and a safe project to be successful. We have a very successful project at WIPP."

--Caig Herndon, Safety and Health manager

Representatives from the two departments were up early Tuesday and Wednesday morning distributing bags with the "Take Safety and Quality Everywhere" slogan and lunchbox coolers with the WIPP logo to employees as they arrived at work. The bags and coolers are a reminder that safety and quality will continue to be the focal point, not only during National Quality Month, but each day of the year.

Contributing Writer: Bill Allen, WRES

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### Happy Birthday Wishes!

**Phil Porter (WTS)**  
October 5

**Sheila Lott (LANL)**  
October 7

**Janice Mashaw (WTS)**  
October 9

**Mark Edwards (WTS)**  
October 11

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## Why did the chicken cross the road? To reclaim its habitat

WIPP is doing its part to reclaim drill pad areas within what is considered habitat for the Lesser Prairie Chicken, a species of wild gallinaceous bird. In March, WTS completed the removal of caliche from four drill pads and reclamation work has been ongoing since then.

**Mary Helen Hernandez (Triumph)**  
October 12

**Kevin Hughes (WTS)**  
October 17

**Robert Johnson (WTS)**  
October 17

**Jim Morrison (WTS)**  
October 18

**Garry Bannister (WTS)**  
October 20

**Joe Field (CTAC)**  
October 20

**Doug Evans (LANL)**  
October 21

**Kirk Nance (WTS)**  
October 22

**Porf Martinez (CTAC)**  
October 23

**Kim Greer (WTS)**  
October 27

**Lana Steven (WTS)**  
October 31

**Is your birthday on our list?**

Employee birthdays are submitted once and must be re-approved for publication by you every year. Please submit birth dates to the TRU TeamWorks staff at:  
[TRUTeamWorks@wipp.ws](mailto:TRUTeamWorks@wipp.ws).

For a printer-friendly version of TRU TeamWorks, please click [here](#).



Raul Navarrete (WTS) and Aurelio Rivas (WTS) seed SNL-6.

One location, AEC-8 has been completely reclaimed, and WTS has reduced the pad size at the other active locations (SNL-6, SNL-8 and SNL-15), as a best management practice. Grando's Dump Truck and Backhoe Service, a small business from Loving, N.M., graded each site for seeding as part of the first phase of reclamation.



SNL-6 immediately after seeding was completed.

Seeding, the second phase of the effort, was completed in the last two weeks of September. WTS employees Aurelio Rivas and Raul Navarrete sowed a special seed mix required by the BLM to promote restoration of the Lesser Prairie Chicken habitat. The BLM recommended initial seeding after mid-July with work to be completed before October.

Todd Suter, a BLM surface protection specialist, and Gene Valett, WIPP Land Use Coordinator, inspected the reclaimed sites the day work was completed. Suter determined that the work was acceptable.

"This work is a great example of how the cooperation between government agencies and supporting contractors can produce results positively impacting the restoration of an important habitat," said Suter.

With Phases 1 and 2 complete, it is hoped that the small gray-striped chicken (actually a grouse) will return. The wild chicken once nested in western Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, eastern Colorado and New Mexico, and was present on the WIPP site at one time. The estimated population of less than 30,000 birds is most abundant from Milnesand to Roswell and south to Jal, N.M.

**Contributing writer: Gene Valett, WRES**

The U.S. Department of Energy  
Waste Isolation Pilot Plant

Please send comments and/or suggestions to: [TRU TeamWorks](mailto:TRUTeamWorks@wipp.ws)

